



INVITATION FOR BIDS

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking one or more individuals/companies to be their In-Market Representative and assist in the execution of all responsibilities pursuant to their market development activities for northeastern U.S. seafood products in the European market. The primary market of activity is France; secondary markets of interest include Spain and Italy. Other European markets may be considered over time, however, markets specifically excluded from this request include Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark, where Food Export already has an existing Seafood In-Market Representative.

The activities to be carried out include: the Market Builder service, Focused Trade Missions, an inbound Seafood Buyers Mission, market research, seafood promotions, special projects and trade servicing for the program year. The selected In-Market Representative(s) will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2019 Program Year from January 1 to December 31, 2019.

Attached please find the official Request for Proposal for details, requirements and deadlines.

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. Faxed or e-mailed proposals will be accepted.

Please forward to:

Food Export USA - Northeast
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1617 JFK Boulevard, Suite 420
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 829-9111
Fax: (215) 829-9777
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Questions should be directed to:

Suzanne Milshaw, International Marketing Program Manager
Food Export USA – Northeast at 215-829-9111 or via email to
SMilshaw@foodexport.org

OR

Teresa Miller, International Marketing Program Manager
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA at 312-334-9200 or via e-mail to
TMiller@foodexport.org



Request for Proposals Europe Seafood In-Market Representative

Background

The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest) and Food Export USA – Northeast (Food Export – Northeast) are not-for-profit export associations whose primary function is to develop export markets for midwestern and northeastern (respectively) producers and processors of value-added food and agricultural products. Our members include state agricultural promotion agencies from thirteen midwestern and ten northeastern states.

Both groups are participants in the Market Access Program (MAP), a federal program handled by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The MAP is intended to boost the export of value-added food and agricultural products from the U.S. through a partnership between FAS and approximately seventy-five other industry-based trade organizations. This includes primarily commodity-specific groups, as well as two other unaffiliated regional groups similar to Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast that handle the southern and western regions of the U.S.

The products covered for export promotion by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast include a wide variety of processed and semi-processed products found throughout the retail, foodservice, and food processing sectors. These include products or derivations of meat, dairy, poultry, seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables, salty and savory snack foods, confections, beans, sauces and condiments, pet foods, beverages, canned foods, animal feeds, bakery products, pasta and many others. Marketing channels include mass market retail, specialty foods, convenience foods, private label, healthy/organic, food ingredients, frozen foods, and others. Additionally, Food Export – Northeast promotes benchmark seafood products from the northeastern U.S. including lobster, scallops, monkfish, Atlantic herring, squid, Atlantic mackerel, dogfish and skate.

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are independent organizations that have been engaged in a strategic alliance since April of 2000. Through this alliance, the strategy and tactics of the organizations have been aligned so that the activities and services of each group are very similar with differences based primarily on geographic focus. Food Export - Midwest focuses on midwestern exporters and a series of nine overseas target markets, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, Oceania, Mexico, and India. Food Export -Northeast targets northeastern exporters and six overseas markets, including Europe, Central America, Canada, the Middle East, South America and the Caribbean. By collaborating, the activities and services of each organization are open to participation by companies from the other region. The net effect is that exporters in the Midwest and Northeast have access to a larger range of export promotion opportunities, while the limited staff at Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast can focus on specific market development opportunities.

The states that are members of Food Export- Midwest include: Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and Oklahoma. Food Export – Northeast encompasses: New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

Food Export – Northeast offers a Seafood Program to fish and shellfish suppliers from the northeastern member states. The program is focused on developing export opportunities and support for international promotion for the benchmark species which include: American lobster, squid, scallops, monkfish, Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic herring and dogfish. In addition, a Food Export – Northeast will continue to assess and pursue export opportunities for other Northeast seafood and Midwest products. A menu of annual activities and services is developed and offered to the industry to create opportunities for them to enter new markets and expand sales.

More information about Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast is available on the Internet at: www.foodexport.org.

Scope of Work

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking one or more individuals/companies to be their In-Market Representative and assist in the execution of all responsibilities pursuant to their market development activities for northeastern seafood products in the European market. The primary market of activity is France; secondary markets of interest include Spain and Italy. Other European markets may be considered over time, however, markets specifically excluded from this request include Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark, where Food Export already has an existing seafood In-Market Representative.

The standard annual activities to be carried out include trade facilitation services for northeastern U.S. seafood suppliers at the Seafood Expo Global Show in Brussels, Belgium each April, nominations of buyers for an inbound Seafood Buyers Mission which takes place in conjunction with the Seafood Expo North America each March, ongoing monthly trade servicing, and approximately one to two Market Builder projects per year (as determined by supplier interest). There is the potential for product promotions, market research, Focused Trade Missions and/or special projects which are determined upon need and budget availability each year. The selected In-Market Representative(s) will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2019 Program Year from January 1 to December 31, 2019. Orientation of any new vendors will likely commence in November 2018.

Please provide a quotation for each of the following services:

1. Trade Servicing

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out trade servicing may include, but are not limited to:

- Visiting with potential importers, distributors, retailers, food service and food ingredient buyers and developing lists of these companies that are the most reputable, experienced, and in the best position to deal with our exporters.

- Developing and maintaining a database of potential importers and buyers from the representative's market, their contact information, and their product interests. Data developed as part of this trade servicing agreement will be shared with Food Export, as allowable by law.
- Conducting outreach and educational efforts on behalf of Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast to encourage participation in our programs and services including organizing Importer Seminars.
- Following up with buyers from buyers missions, Market Builder, Focused Trade Missions, other special projects and obtain evaluations and/or identify problems which may be inhibiting sales.
- Participate actively in the usage of Food Export NetForum database either by entering notes in the system or providing any updates on contacts listed.
- Liaising with USDA/FAS Posts on a regular basis, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), European counterpart agencies, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to maintain awareness of policy, trade and market issues that may affect the seafood industry in the northeastern U.S. This includes proactive communication, monitoring and consolidating industry feedback.
- Informing Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast of market development opportunities that arise throughout the year and activities that should be included in our annual funding application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Unified Export Strategy (UES).
- Promoting Food Export's Online Product Catalog and generating trade lead inquiries for dissemination to Midwest and Northeast companies.
- Assisting with Branded Program inquiries as requested.
- Assisting our State Marketing Specialists on a limited basis.
- Informing Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast of any noteworthy market intelligence that should be included in our communication tools that goes out to exporters (newsletters, social media, blog, etc.)
- Reporting on any potential success story leads and actual sales that have resulted from a Food Export program or activity.

In addition to the above, the In-Market Representative is expected to assist Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast to:

- Track sales and other performance measures resulting from all events in which services are provided. Assist in documenting performance results by completing

evaluations using Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast standard evaluation formats, where appropriate. Generate success stories as results warrant. Identify problems which may be inhibiting sales and in obtaining evaluation results.

- Refer participating importers and exporters to other relevant services offered by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export - Northeast, the FAS offices and other service providers that can further assist them in achieving increased sales/purchases of U.S. food and agricultural products.
- The In-Market Representative will be responsible for providing a monthly report outlining the trade servicing completed and any results achieved.

Please quote on a per day basis.

2. Market Builder

Background

The Market Builder Service is designed to assist U.S. companies to learn whether their products are appropriate for a given export market, and if so, to establish a base for securing an appropriate distributor relationship in that market. The service is provided by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast through their network of In-Market Representatives. The service consists of two independent packages, i.e., Market Scan and Rep Finder. Although companies are encouraged to sign up for both packages (or a full Market Builder), companies may choose to participate in one or both packages detailed below depending on their needs and goals in the market. Participating companies will need to choose a product and identify the export market for which they want the service to be conducted. For the Market Scan component, the In-Market Representative will have thirty days after samples or company literature from participants are received to complete the scope of work. In the interest of standardizing reports that our export companies receive, Food Export has developed report templates which include the components outlined below.

Scope of Work

Package A – Market Scan

1. Introduction and Product Specific Market Overview
The In-Market Representative will provide a well-rounded, comprehensive overview of the market, current product usage in the market and applicable trends.
2. Store Check
The In-Market Representative will assist U.S. food companies to determine competing and similar products that are being sold in the overseas market.
3. Competitive Product Shopping
The In-Market Representative will purchase samples of similar and competing products sold in the market – up to US\$25 value of samples + shipping. If need be, the IMR can send only the products’ packaging, especially when products are liquid, shelf-sensitive, etc.
4. Distribution Analysis
This section outlines physical movement of the product to be successfully delivered and marketed to the end customer.

5. Importation Analysis & Regulations
The In-Market Representative will create a report that identifies import regulations and restrictions affecting the importation of said product into the country.
6. Distributor Referrals
The In-Market Representative will forward product samples (if possible), product brochures or literature, company profile and indicative export pricing to six appropriate and pre-qualified importers. The representative will create a report containing feedback from at least five buyers regarding said product.
7. Target Importer List
The In-Market Representative will provide a list of potential importers, including those involved in the distributor referrals above. Importers will be prioritized according to interest in the product as well as provide a brief summary of each importer's profile such as distribution, existing product lines and other available public information. Buyers that are not interested are also listed with reasoning behind the lack of interest.
8. In-Market Representative's General Marketability View
This includes the IMR's view of product's marketability with important marketing recommendations; should be subjective and based on opinions and/or observations in the market and no more than two to three paragraphs.

Package B – Rep Finder

1. Distributor Referrals
The In-Market Representative will forward product samples, product brochures or literature, company profile and indicative export pricing to six appropriate and pre-qualified importers. The In-Market Representative will create a report containing feedback from at least five buyers regarding said product.
2. Target Importer List
The In-Market Representative will provide a list of potential importers, including those involved in the distributor referrals above. Importers will be prioritized according to interest in the product. The list will include contact name and contact information as well as also provide a brief summary of each importer's profile such as distribution, existing product lines and other available, public information. Buyers that are not interested are also listed with reasoning behind the lack of interest.
3. In-Market Assistance
The In-Market Representative will arrange at least three one-on-one appointments between participating U.S. exporters and targeted importers in his/her market. It must be clear to supplier before project begins that a minimum of three one-on-one meetings only stands if market allows and finds product conducive.

The In-Market Representative will make arrangements for the time, place, interpreter (if necessary) and other details of the meetings.

The In-Market Representative will also make personal introductions and accompany the supplier to the appointments and will assist with communication or interpretation, if necessary, and moderate the sessions. The Representative will also provide the participating U.S. exporter with a candid evaluation of the meetings and make recommendations for future action steps.

This service is provided on an as-needed basis. A detailed template for the report will be provided; Market Scan reports average 25 – 40 pages. A full Market Builder requires approximately 6-7 days of work. Please provide quotes for each package of the Market Builder service and for providing the combined packages per project.

4. Buyers Missions

Background

Food Export – Midwest’s and Food Export Northeast’s approach to organizing buying teams is to first identify sectors of the food industry in which their suppliers are competitive. These sectors include Grocery Products, Specialty Foods, Seafood, Food Ingredients, Private Label, Natural/Organic, Food Service (HRI), Pet Food, and Feed Ingredients and Additives. Next, markets that are appropriate for that segment of the food industry are targeted, and important Buyers within these sectors are selected.

Buyers are invited to travel to the U.S. to participate in a series of private one-on-one meetings with U.S. suppliers. These meetings offer an unparalleled opportunity for each to learn more about the other’s business, product line, marketing requirements or capabilities, strategies, opportunities, requirements and limitations.

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out a Buyers Mission are as follows:

- 1) Work with Activity Coordinator(s) to determine needs of the Buyers Mission.
- 2) Pre-qualify and recruit appropriate Buyers, including any recommendations made by the local FAS Office.
- 3) Communicate closely with Buyers to understand their buying interests.
- 4) Provide a detailed profile of each Buyer to the Activity Coordinator.
- 5) Assist Activity Coordinator with details of the itinerary.
- 6) Assist Activity Coordinator to understand any special/cultural needs the Buyers may have.
- 7) Work with Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast and their travel agents to make appropriate travel arrangements.
- 8) Depending on the mission, the In-Market Representative may be requested to attend the mission to assist with various tasks, such as interpretation, communication and general management/logistics of mission.
- 9) Provide input into retail tour needs.
- 10) Assist with follow-up after the mission is completed to understand the results of the mission (i.e., sales made).
- 11) Assist Activity Coordinator or Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast with follow-up evaluation process.

Please quote on a per buyer basis.

5. Focused Trade Missions

Background

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast and their member states work with small and medium-size food companies. Among the challenges of working with these companies is their lack of understanding and exposure to many markets. Often times, these companies try to sell their products and develop business relationships in countries they have not traveled to or toured in order to familiarize themselves with the basics of that market. This lack of understanding leaves U.S. exporters with only product specifications and prices as tools to market to foreign markets and often ends in failure.

The Focused Trade Mission is designed to offer U.S. exporters both a sales opportunity and educational experience. This project will take advantage of established relationships and programs available to U.S. exporters and provide a unique opportunity to travel to a target market not anchored to exhibiting at a tradeshow. Often, cost and time prohibit U.S. tradeshow exhibitors from the opportunity to study the market outside the tradeshow walls.

The Focused Trade Mission will partner with the following services and service providers: FAS Overseas office, Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast representatives, the Branded Program and member state representatives to offer U.S. companies a first-hand experience of the target market and highlight opportunities and constraints. Coupled with the educational component of this mission, there will be scheduled meetings and a tabletop reception to put U.S. exporters in contact with potential Buyers.

Scope of Work

Total participation averages eight or more companies per mission, depending on recruitment. The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out a Focused Trade Mission are as follows:

- 1) Develop an executive summary of goals, objectives, plans and budget to administer the project, and a detailed timeline for completion of each phase of the project plan in close coordination with the Activity Coordinator. Budget should include a total cost to administer the project for eight companies.
- 2) Communicate project details to the appointed Activity Coordinator. Conduct pre-event product research (approximately 5 – 8 pages) on one product per registered supplier which includes three of the four following components: market overview, cost assessment, importation analysis and distribution analysis.
- 3) Conduct a market briefing in conjunction with FAS Office. The In-Market Representative will coordinate with the FAS Office to present a market briefing to the participating companies. If agreed by FAS, the briefing could take place in FAS facilities. In-Market Representative will make the request to the FAS office as soon as the project is approved.
- 4) Organize pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings. The In-Market Representative will set-up a number of appointments with importers, distributors, supermarket buyers, etc. The appointments may take place in a joint meeting space or at the importers' offices, as appropriate for the market.
- 5) Arrange supermarket or industry tours. In-Market Representative will organize visits to different retail stores as part of the learning experience of visiting the market. During the tours, companies will be able to learn who is doing business in the market, what types of products are selling, and what prices various products are selling at in the market.

- 6) Conduct a Table Top Show and Reception. In-Market Representative will organize a table-top display of participating companies products and, where feasible, a reception including sampling of the products being showcased. The table-top display can be held at the FAS facilities, if available. Importers, Distributors and Buyers will be invited to the reception (a minimum of thirty trade contacts should be confirmed). In-Market Representative will produce and disseminate invitations to the showcase to all local trade contacts.
- 7) Transportation coordination: The In-Market Representative will coordinate the in-country transportation of all the mission participants to business events that are part of the Focused Trade Mission agenda. Passenger vans will be rented as they are needed.
- 8) Interpreters: The In-Market Representative will coordinate hiring additional interpreters, so all the participating companies are able to get clear translation/interpretation during the complete Trade Mission.
- 9) Hotel Reservations: The In-Market Representative will be in charge of arranging hotel accommodations for mission events as well as lodging for all Mission participants at federal per diem rate. (Exporter/participants will pay their own lodging and meal expenses).
- 10) Importation of samples into the market: The In-Market Representative will coordinate the importation of the samples into the market.
- 11) The In-Market Representative will arrange for the printing of a mission brochure containing information on all the Mission participants, including contact information and company and/or product profiles. Approximately 500 copies (or a sufficient number of copies according to the needs of each particular market) may be printed in large, professional format. Each participating exporter will use this as a handout during the showcase, the reception and during the one-on-one business appointments. Any brochures remaining will be left at the FAS office to hand-out to people inquiring for information.

Based on our experience, we estimate a Focused Trade Mission activity will require approximately 50 days of preparation work plus the execution of the mission. Please provide a quote which is comprised of an overall administrative fee for the mission, plus a per-supplier participant fee for mission services for participants one through eight, then, include cost per supplier beyond eight participants.

6. Market Research, Development and Promotion

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out market research, development and promotion are as follows:

- Undertake industry and/or sector studies as requested;
- Identify, recommend and facilitate promotional opportunities in the food service, food retail, and food ingredient sectors of the market;
- Develop and assist with implementation of promotional activities within the guidelines specified by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast including negotiating promotional terms, assisting with in-store merchandising and display, development of promotional concepts and materials, etc;
- Assist in ensuring that products from the Midwest and Northeast are included in the promotion;
- Submit a report on the activity and provide required evaluation results;

- Perform other specific consulting work as requested by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast.
- Trade Show Pavilion Coordination for seafood companies at Seafood Expo Global.

Please quote on a per day basis.

Requirements

The In-Market Representative must be able to cite previous experience in market research, market assessment and evaluation, and market promotion/public relations activities. Previous project experience with the seafood industry is required and should be detailed in the response. Past experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, and food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. The contractor must also be financially and legally capable of entering into and executing a contract for the above stated projects. In addition, please provide the following information:

1. Name of Entity (as it would appear on contract/invoices)
2. Main point of contact
3. Complete Mailing Address / Physical Office Address
4. EIN/TIN/SS number (or if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country)
5. Type of Structure (choose one):
 Individual Corporation LLC Partnership Sole Proprietorship
6. List the specific country/countries in Europe where expertise and services can be rendered..

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are not liable for any costs associated with any company’s response to this RFP. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast reserve the right to not award this contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. The awarded contract may be renewed for up to three (3) years.

Selected vendors may be requested to participate in interviews with Food Export staff and/or its representatives. Interviews may be conducted prior to or during the SIAL trade show in Paris, France or other European cities in early – mid October 2018.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export – Northeast Terms and Conditions:

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or military status. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us. Food Export - Midwest and Food Export – Northeast do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/codeofethics).

If you suspect any instance of fraud, please contact our Ethics Reporting Line at: www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com or 1-855-727-6715 (domestic toll-free.)

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast does not comply with MAP; FAS; Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast regulations or policies, or otherwise reflect positively on them; their members states; FAS; or USDA, in pursuit of their mission of increasing food and agricultural exports, or for continued public support for their programs. For more information please see our Terms and Conditions located at www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by the provisions contained in Section 202 of Executive Order 11246 (30 Federal Register 12319) with regard to employment and contracting practices. In addition, Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast require that its contractors may not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, military status or membership in the military reserve.

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